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Kennedy Urges Release of U. S. Prestige Report

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Sen. John F. Kennedy (D-Mass.) yesterday asked the State Department to let him see the results of polls on the status of United States prestige abroad—since Vice President Richard M. Nixon has told him he has no objection to releasing them.

He also urged Nixon to use his influence to get the report made public.

Simultaneously, Chairman J. W. Fulbright (D-Ark.) of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee wrote George V. Allen, director of the U. S. Information Agency, demanding that the results of the polls be made public.

The polls were ordered taken by the USIA and according to Kennedy, "our prestige and influence around the world have shown such a drop that up to now the State Department has been unwilling to release them."

Nixon, in his TV debate with Kennedy Friday night, declared: "The report to which Senator Kennedy refers is one that was made many, many months ago and related particularly to the period immediately after Sputnik (Oct., 1957).

As far as this report is concerned, I would have no objection to having it made public."

As for the question of U. S. prestige abroad, Nixon declared then: "American prestige abroad will be just as high as the spokesmen for America allow it to be. When he (Kennedy) makes statements like this . . . it can only have the effect, certainly, of reducing it. . . . He has contributed to any lack of prestige."

Nixon Said Prestige High

Previously, Nixon had characterized American prestige abroad as being "at an all-time high."

Nixon's "no objection" statement during the debate left unclear how much information on U. S. prestige a key campaign issue is to be made public in the two weeks remaining before the election.

Reports so far indicate at least three Federal offices have papers dealing with the prestige question:

- USIA, which began commissioning private poll groups to make surveys on the U. S. "image" abroad right after Sputnik and reportedly had,

its most recent poll results computed at the end of July.

- The National Security Council, which, according to Sen. Fulbright, was given a summary paper on USIA results dated Aug. 29.

- A special Presidential Committee on International Activities Abroad which reportedly has corroborated the results of USIA polls with charts and documents from the Central Intelligence Agency as well as through its own interviews with foreign ambassadors stationed in Washington and U. S. educational and cultural exchange officials.

This committee is headed by Mansfield D. Sprague, vice president of the American Machine & Foundry Co. and, until 1958, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security. A statement issued by the White House Thursday quoted Sprague as saying that U. S. prestige today is "pre-eminent."

The panel does not expect to complete its report for submission to President Eisenhower until after election.

A source familiar with the Sprague Committee findings told The Washington Post that evidence gathered shows U. S. prestige has been declining steadily since the Soviet Sputnik. Moreover, the USIA polls reportedly show that in 9 out of 10 nations people surveyed believe the Soviet Union is nosing out the United States scientifically, militarily and in over-all world leadership, now and for the decade to come.

In testifying before the House Committee on Science and Astronautics Jan. 22, USIA Director Allen Dulles declared: "Before Sputnik I, few people of the Free World believed the Soviet Union was currently in a position to challenge America in the broad fields of science, technology and production. Now, the Sputniks and Luniks are taken as evidence that the Soviet Union is able to challenge America successfully in all these fields, including even production."

As for the U. S. space program, Allen testified: "Today, although we continue to see the hope expressed abroad that the U. S. will catch up, we also see growing doubt that this is likely during the next 5 or even 10 years."